The Unitarian Calendar

Straight from the Mighty Bow, this truth is driven:
"They fail, and they alone, who have not striven.'
Fly far, O shaft of light, all doubt redeeming,
Rouse men from dull despair and idle dreaming:
High Heaven's Evangel be, gospel God-given;
They fail, and they alone, who have not striven.

CLARENCE URMY

Vol. 3 OCTOBER — 1910 No. 2

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With headquarters in the building of the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Local offices at 104 East 20th Street, New York City; 175 Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill., and Cor. Franklin and Geary Streets, San Francisco, Cal.

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Founded in 1825.

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The Unitarian Calendar

VOL. 3 OCTOBER, 1910. No. 2

THE ORIGINALITY OF CHRISTIANITY

BY EDWARD CAIRD.

There has been much controversy about the originality of Christianity, and especially of the teaching of Jesus—a controversy which has led to little profitable result, because it has dealt mainly with the particular details and not with the meaning and spirit of the whole. Just as the point of distinction between man and the other animals has been sought in some special bone, or sinew, or convolution of the brain, so the distinctive excellence and originality of Christianity has been sought in some special ethical precept or principle, to which nothing analagous can be found in any previous religious or philosophical system. There is, however, no originality which we may not fritter away on such a method; for, in a sense, all moral truth is implicitly contained in the first experiences of a self-conscious being, and, therefore, glimpses of the highest to which man can rise may be expected even in the earliest stages of human development.

In this region originality consists only in the deepening and widening of generally recognized truths, or in applying with clear consciousness and systematic purpose, ideas which were before apprehended as passing lights of intuition. It is, therefore, little to the purpose to say that Jewish prophets described a suffering "servant of God," who "bore the sins and carried the sorrows of others;" or that Jewish Rabbis long

before Christ, or even Chinese moralists before Confucius, formulated the golden rule. As little is it to the purpose to point to Plato's assertion that it is better to suffer than to do injustice, or to his proof that there is a spiritual life in man which death cannot affect. These and many other points of contact between Christian and pre-Christian thought undoubtedly exist; yet, when we look at the ideas and character of Jesus as a whole, we can see that all such scattered elements have there acquired a new meaning, as the elements of a new unity—a new *organic* conception of human life in its relations to nature and to God—which, taken in its entirety, has no previous counterpart, and which, indeed, constitutes the greatest step that has ever been gained in the spiritual development of man.

THE SYMPATHY OF GOD

BY REV. ROBERT COLLYER.

I do not want God set up aloof in a picture painted on a roof. If I have got to go through anything that pulls upon the last inch of manhood, I want him to go through it, too. He came here before I did, and knows all about it, and I do not want him to come here and be alone and have a good time all the while. If I have something that wrings my heart, he has got to have his heart wrung, too. I do not want science to take away the sympathy of God from me. If it does, then I fight science. But I think it will bring us into sweeter and deeper relations to him to know the universality of his presence. Some great French teacher says it is not hard to believe in God if you do not try too much to define him. Thackeray says: "It is not the right thing to open a rose with a penknife; if you let the sun shine on it, it will open time enough."

THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF GOOD AND EVIL

BY REV. JAMES T. BIXBY, PH. D.

Vice and injustice are ever destroying themselves. It is a matter of simple scientific observation that the preponderance of selfishness among a family or a people, and the decay of that family or people, go together. The predominance of egotism is a physiological sign that the vitality of the species is exhausted; the family instinct dies out, and the individuals cease to perpetuate themselves.

As Dr. Nordau has pointed out: "The larger the number of beings who place their own interests higher than all the duties of solidarity and the ideals of the development of the species, the nearer is the species to the end of its vital career. While, on the other hand, the more individuals there are in a nation who have an instinct with them, impelling them to deeds of heroism, self-abnegation and sacrifice for the community, the more potent are the vital energies of the race."

The best of social fertilizers, then, are affection and sympathy. Virtue has a self-propagating power. Self-sacrifice, emptying the soul of the dregs of selfishness, and filling it with the living water of the Eternal Spirit, makes harvests burgeon and ripen, wherever its irrigating stream spreads abroad. Morality is no invention of priests, statesmen, or philosophers. It is an irresistible growth of the human heart, the fairest blossom, the age-long victory and product of that Divine Life of the universe that has ever moved onward from chaos to cosmos, from carnal to spiritual. That lustrous march is no drama of red-toothed carnage, but a patient ascent through successive planes of wider and more intimate co-operation, fusing individuals in fam-

ilies, families in tribes, tribes in nations, and nations in the universal family of God's children, in which Jew and Greek, male and female, black and white, must have their equal right and place before the tribunal of Christian equity and sympathy. The highest efflorescence on the century-plant of cosmic life, the message of nature, as of Scripture, is Love.

The universe is God's unfenced and all-inclusive communion table; and every act of humane ministration, every helpful hand stretched out to the weak or fallen is a sacred rite in its holy Eucharist.

CONFIDENCE IN OUR TEACHING

The most valuable asset of the Unitarian body is its confidence of being on the right road. Its opponents have thrown all sorts of contempt upon Unitarianism, have ridiculed its supposed numerical weakness and prophesied its extinction a thousand times; and then they have meekly adopted the positions that Unitarianism had safely secured long before, and loudly claimed themselves the discoverers of those positions. And all the time Unitarianism keeps moving up the highway of religious progress, gathering strength and recognition as it proceeds and sending out an increasingly effective influence into the very churches that proclaim its ruin.

The finest intellects are as remarkable for the ease with which they resist and throw off what does not concern them as for the permanence with which their own truths engrave themselves.

—Philip Gilbert Hamerton.

HOW TO START

In the early Autumn our church homes are open again for mutual inspiration and effective service. This is the time to contemplate the life of the local church with serious deliberation. There are a few suggestions that are worth considering.

1. Decide to give the church service the right of way on Sunday morning. If you like your church, your minister, and your fellow-members, this will not be so very difficult. It will be a pleasure to be all together again and feel human and friendly toward one another and all united in the pursuit of the highest ends of living.

If you do not feel much pleasure in it, do it for the good fibre the church-going habit will put into your manhood and womanhood, the fine challenge it will offer to others, and the solidity it will contribute to the character of the children. Unitarians profess to believe in "salvation by character," but it is a pretty gelatinous character which never prompts a person to do that which would be less pleasurable than something else.

2. Let each individual nominate, second the nomination, and unanimously elect himself a member of the Hospitality Committee. There are some things that will come so if enough people say so. If the members of the Unitarian Church all insist on saying, "Our church is really the most hospitable church in town," it will become so in spite of anything. Get the right attitude toward the great outside world whose turbulent waves come beating against every community nowadays. What minister does not know that many a life has been saved from desperation and many a soul rescued from intolerable loneliness by the unaffected greeting which says, "It is just as if we had always been friends."

To get the home atmosphere into a church is its guarantee of permanence.

3. Resolve to keep the money worry out of the parsonage. If the people knew the kind of questions that the minister has to answer, they would conclude that he has trouble enough without being subjected to pecuniary nightmare. Why not decide on a system of church finance and then live up to it? Why not all get together at the start and dispose of the money question and have it out of the way,—so much for this, and so much for that, and so much for the other,—and then pledges from everybody to cover the budget, with payments to be made as regularly as a grocer's bill is paid, and so done with it? It is difficult to get the real goodness out of a church until the money nuisance is abated. Having its own security assured in this respect, it can be a missionary and a Good Samaritan all the rest of the year.

And, in dealing with the financial problem at the beginning of the church year, the contribution to the American Unitarian Association should not be overlooked nor postponed. By deliberately going about it in a systematic way, seriously assuming a share in the denominational welfare and growth, larger results will be realized and less effort will be required. We hope to have some valuable methods to recommend for this purpose. This year let us roll up a fund for church extension which will do justice to the great privileges of our faith.

4. During the year let us, if there seems to be the slightest need of it, cultivate faith in each other, in the local church, in the denomination at large, and in those who are set to do the administrative work. Open your Year Books, and read carefully the names of the men and women who compose the board of directors, and then try to imagine from them any attempt to deal in a small-minded or prejudiced way, or with any spirit of autocracy or indifference toward any

church or individual. A fine *esprit de corps* is stronger than any creed or any manner of church discipline. It is the only bond in the Unitarian body. It is the bond of the spirit, and, when it is encouraged and increased from year to year, it prevails over all disintegrating influences and gradually eliminates every element of discord.

Let us this year open the doors of our churches, resolved to do justice all around,—to the church service, the financial demands, to the claims of hospitality, to the interests of the denomination at large, and, above all, to the enduring spiritual principles which make it a great privilege to be a Unitarian.

LEWIS G. WILSON.

Great beliefs, as we acquire them, push us farther out into the deep. Thus no great truth is gained which does not necessitate a stronger faith. It is a mistake to suppose that man loses faith when he leaves the old moorings and takes his chances on the high seas of expanding knowledge. It is only a childish faith at best that keeps him forever within the little cove of parental consent.

You must practice what you see, and take the next step that seems right, whether you can see any further or not. It is often true that, in following a blind path, it opens only as you go on. The next step may make the third one plain.

—*M. J. Savage.*

He who is able to attend synagogue, and neglects to do so, is a bad neighbor.

—*The Talmud.*

THE SENSE OF SIN

BY REV. JOHN W. DAY.

Of the Church of the Messiah, St. Louis, Mo.

One of the criticisms made of President Eliot's address on "The Religion of the Future" is also made of the religious movement in which he is one of the most distinguished laymen. It lacks, we are told, the sense of sin. But, we ask in rejoinder, "How much do people need the sense of sin?" Some people need it badly. If there were a way to administer it to the smug, conceited persons who are impervious to any criticism, and whose egotism will turn blame into injury and fault into defense, we should be eager to use that way. But there are persons who would suffer undeservedly and pitifully by such method. There are people who have already far too much sense of sin. They need more as much as Niagara needs irrigation. Their faults haunt them too easily. They are sensitive to the point of morbidness. There are men trying to get out of the grip of sin to whom preaching more of it does just the opposite of what it intends. Many sins fatten on the efforts of high-minded people to purify the world of them.

It is not so much the sense of sin the religion of any time needs as more sense about sin, more sense about its nature and place. It is a microscopic sort of instinct, which is, indeed, very important when you haven't it, but which it is even more important to get rid of when you have. Instilling it into the mind has, in the long run, done more harm than good. The soil of righteousness is respect for itself. No one expects to raise fruit by cursing the trees he depends on for fruit. Human nature is not likely to be fruitful by any such treatment. That we do not try to stir the better nature by teaching men to say that they are miserable sinners and

have no health in them is entirely to our credit. We make the blame our plume. We will not say that the best thing God has yet made is a disgrace to him and has no mark of a father. Let us by all means have a wholesome sense of our shortcomings, our unworthiness to be called his sons, but let us not quench the knowledge that we are his sons, nor think he likes us to affect a continuing debasement as a reason for his favor. That mode of approach is not to any true father's mind. Why should it be thought agreeable to our Heavenly Father? Jesus never appealed to any such sense of worthlessness, even while he stirred in men their deepest needs. If any of our number are troubled by the charge that we lack the sense of sin, let them take to themselves the words of Paul: "Thanks be to God that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness."

If, coming to your home, I say to you, "Show me your father," do you, if your father is alive and at home, show me certain photographs taken of your father years ago, in answer to my question? Or do you not bring me to where your father is? And when I ask you about that other Father of yours and mine, and ask you to show Him to me, why do you persist in asking me to look at the creed-copies of ancient pictures of Him? Is He not here, at home? Is He not to be met face to face in this, His world? Can you not show Him to me in the place where you are working with Him in the business of doing good? —*Charles W. Casson.*

THE MODERN CHURCH

BY REV. WILLIAM S. JONES.

Of Channing Memorial Church, Newport, R. I.

Does not social need lie at the gate of religion, at the gate of the church? Other ages have given themselves earnestly and devoutly to the cultivation of the personal spiritual life. The question of individual salvation was all-absorbing. The question of social redemption was then a small cloud upon the horizon. Undoubtedly our own generation pays altogether too little attention to spiritual self-culture—that is one of its obvious defects—but it is becoming acutely conscious of the unnecessary unhappiness and pain and suffering in the world and seeks to remedy them. We have as yet found no one panacea which will cure all social ills, but we ought by every means in our power to try to get rid of all needless poverty and disease. The sullen murmur of economic and industrial discontent now penetrates into the sanctuary and mingles with our prayers for peace and strength. The church cannot ignore that cry, even if at times it lacks wisdom and knowledge. She must go forth, if not as an institution, then through the person of her members, to make human brotherhood a present fact and not an idle dream in every social issue and every industrial conflict. With the poor and needy at her gate, often bitter and resentful and suspicious, what better can she do than to reconsecrate herself to human service in the spirit of her Master and Head when he dedicated himself to God and man in the synagogue at Nazareth? Let the Christian church, conscious as never before of Lazarus at the gate, put into her creed and into her life the words which Jesus quoted from Isaiah and applied to himself: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he

anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

UNITARIAN HYMN

Light of ages and of nations!
Every race, and every time,
Has received thine inspirations,
Glimpses of thy truth sublime.
Always spirits in rapt vision
Passed the heavenly veil within;
Always hearts bowed in contrition
Found salvation from their sin.

Reason's noble aspiration
Truth in growing clearness saw;
Conscience spoke its condemnation,
Or proclaimed the Eternal law.
While thine inward revelations
Told thy saints their prayers were heard,
Prophets to the guilty nations
Spoke thine everlasting word.

Lord, that word abideth ever;
Revelation is not sealed;
Answering now to our endeavor,
Truth and Right are still revealed.
That which came to ancient sages,
Greek, Barbarian, Roman, Jew,
Written in the soul's deep pages,
Shines to-day, forever new!

—*Samuel Longfellow.*

The thief who finds no opportunity to steal considers himself an honest man.—*The Talmud.*

THE UNITARIAN OPPORTUNITY

BY REV. W. A. WOOD.

Of the First Unitarian Society, West Upton, Mass.

A message without a messenger is of little value to the world. Jesus said: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." But fishermen usually go where the fish are. Jesus spoke also of sowing seed and reaping harvests and of fields "already white unto harvest."

Here, then, is our Unitarian opportunity. The message has come to us,—from school, through line of descent, by individual search. What shall we do with it? Hide it in a napkin? Store it away in musty volumes? Tie it up in pew rents and other receipts? No, let us carry it by the living voice and the living hand; let us proclaim it wherever man is found. But in person, I would say, as well as by sermon and tract. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," said Jesus. We have a message that has a saving grace; don't put it under a bushel; set it on the candlestick and let it shine.

Evangelism is praiseworthy; if it were not, I would not be a Unitarian. Good things get spread around by advertising, but nothing takes the place of the commercial traveller. We need effective outdoor missioners, who will proclaim the Unitarian message in season and out of season. We need preachers who are not afraid to compete in the religious markets of the world with the devotees of other faiths. A little hard work won't hurt us. We need men like Mackay of Uganda, Livingstone on the Congo, Paton among the New Hebrides,—pioneers of the Cross of Jesus. The message is ours, the open door is before us, the field is waiting for the toilers. We must carry our message by hand and voice and deliver it by personal effort. We can't save the world by long-distance telephone;

the best way is to get down to action and move men to thought by personal work. "And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I, send me.'"

CHRISTIANITY A LIFE-GIVER

BY REV. LAURENCE HAYWARD.

Of the First Religious Society, Newburyport, Mass.

Christianity values earnestness and striving more than the world does. Two-thirds of its heroes are those who have not done easily what they have done, who have borne their witness against the current, or have resisted unto death. There are no persons it helps more than those who are in any way struggling,—those meeting temptation, undergoing hardship and suffering, or the unpopularity of earnestness.

But nevertheless, Christianity makes one alive to the beauty and harmony of the spiritual life. It shows that goodness is interesting, adventurous, worth while; that happiness is consistent with goodness, and that the spiritual is a full, rich life. In short, though it may have its cross and surely has its difficulties, it prays not only for the armor of God,—the strong, vigorous mind,—but also for the grace of Christ, the willing, confident, assured manner of meeting them.

And thefts from satellites and rings
  And broken stars I drew;
And out of spent and aged things
  I framed the worlds anew.

—*Emerson.*

THE FEAR OF GOD

BY REV. GEORGE A. THAYER, D.D.

Of the First Unitarian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.

"I fear God and am not afraid of him." Sir Thomas Browne, two hundred and fifty years ago, wrote this sentence, which in his day was much in advance of current religious thinking. The true fear of God is simple reverence; the dread of God is superstition.

One of the wholesome effects of education through the later centuries has been that the old-time terror and distrust of nature and the unseen spiritual powers have been supplanted by fearlessness and confidence. Unthinking man looks upon the world as a den of ferocious wild beasts. Lightning, wind, drought, and cold are personalities of evil ever lurking in wait for him with mischievous intent. Enlightened man harnesses the lightning and the wind, converts possible elements of disease into helps to bodily vigor, and sees in every force which as yet has not been mastered a possible draft-horse for his wagon. Thus the widening of man's acquaintance with the real world begets a sense of its essential friendliness; and since the world of the senses is but the garment of the Infinite Spirit, he learns to look upon God as a friend and ever-ready ally.

The mission of religion of the free reason is to encourage this assurance that the divine and the human are in partnership with no antagonisms.

The dark ways of the universe must be confessed as disguised benevolence; there is no providence of hate, nothing truly malign; only the working of laws which, if man will but learn them,—and that is the business of living—will always be found to be his allies and helpers. God is always with man, if man will only find it out.

PRAYER

BY REV. SAMUEL R. CALTHROP, L. H. D.

While a man is in a constant state of perplexity about prayer and its true function, he cannot possibly make very successful experiments upon prayer. Some ask despairingly: "How can prayer possibly affect the immutable divine will? Is it not perfectly useless even to try?" All this is abstract metaphysics, and very poor stuff of the kind at that. Rather ask the truly experimental question, in which alone there is guidance for action: "How does opening the eyelids alter the relation between my eyes and the light?" Why, the glorious revealing light comes in, a thing it cannot do to shut eyes. "How does breathing-in alter the relation of my lungs to the air?" Why, it brings the air that was before outside of me inside of me, just where I absolutely need it for very life, that is all. The open soul takes God in. The shut soul keeps God out, that is all. The immutable, eternal laws of light and air are not changed. They are illustrated thereby. The immutable love-will of God is not changed. Its glorious working is illustrated when the believing soul opens its gates and lets the King of Glory in.

It is vain if it pour, and my cup is bottom-side up; with what draught shall I quench my thirst? Prayer is my struggle to get my cup right side up. And the mother's "God bless you!" and the friend's "God help you!" will be, as long as humanity lasts, the soul's instinctive cry to a God in whose ability to hear and answer prayer it will never cease to believe.—*E. B. Willson.*

An individual is poor, a nation is poor, because the individual or the nation has disregarded the eternal laws of God's righteousness. Industry, that kind of industry which goes along with honesty in earning and paying for what we have; the proper use of those things that come into our possession; the spending only for things that conduce to the general or personal welfare; the use of money as you use any other faculty and power, in the light of conscience and truth,—when we attain an attitude like this toward the general question, when we are ready to recognize these facts and principles and live them out in the light of the right and the wrong, then we shall be on the road to the abolition of poverty, and to the lifting up of the civilization of the world into a general condition of prosperity and power, and the possibility of ever higher and higher development. But we cannot prosper financially any more than any other way, in defiance of the laws of God. God is not mocked in Wall Street and State Street any more than in the church. Whatsoever a man soweth, whatsoever a nation soweth, that shall it also reap. —*M. J. Savage.*

Let all ministers and others who are interested in the welfare of local churches, lay centres and other religious movements, consider seriously whether they cannot to advantage make use of this CALENDAR.

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